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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Argentina

DATE DISTR. 3 May 1948

SUBJECT Argentine Government Reaction to Labor Unrest

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1. The Argentine Government's recent action in arresting several persons, holding them incommunicado, subjecting them to questioning and, later, expelling those who were citizens of a foreign country, was characterized by source as a "witch hunt" to cover up the Government's inefficient handling of current labor problems. According to source, none of the individuals listed by the Government as political intrigants and professional agitators was actually involved in the bank strike of late March.

2. The Government, fearing a series of strikes among Government workers, metallurgical workers, printers, and packing-house workers, ordered the political coordination section of the Casa Rosada secret police to work out a plan to combat increasing labor unrest. Two officers assigned to the overall investigation of labor matters were Guillermo Solveyra Casares and Lt. Colonel Juan Castro, both of whom are very close to President Peron.

3. One of the targets for investigation was the Overseas News Agency (ONA). According to one source, this agency has been suspected of being an American information center.* The publicized reason for the probe of ONA (b)(1) (b)(3) that ONA correspondents maintained contact with known subversive elements and wrote with malicious intent to undermine the good work of the Government.

4. A severe anti-labor campaign, prepared by Government officials, will include the following measures:

   A. Increased police surveillance of activities of leading labor unions;

   B. Justification of repressive measures by blaming strikes and agitation on "foreign influences;"

   C. Arrest and exile of politicians suspected of fomenting labor unrest.

*Washington Comment: ONA, (b)(1) (b)(3) has been for the past four years extremely leftist in its sentiments. The chiefs of several of its branch offices in Latin America are known Communists, and many of the articles appearing in its press releases have been not only strongly pro-Russian but definitely anti-United States.

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